

Chapter 76

It's Not Like You Haven't Seen Me in This State

Without sparing her a single glance, Miles walked out of the door and acted as though he didn't see Stella. On the other hand, the moment Kevin saw Stella, he could barely hide the guilty expression on his face as he initiated to exchange pleasantries. "Hello, Stella. I didn't expect to see you here."

Upon answering with a grunt, Stella took a quick glimpse at the person, but he seemed to have walked further away as he disappeared into the dark.

Today, Stella was dressed rather differently from the way she dressed in the past.

Back then, although she was dressed in professional attire, her style still carried somewhat a Madam's vibe, which she couldn't seem to change within a short period of time. As of now, since she had started her own boutique, her sense of fashion had improved quite a bit. In a formal black suit, and with her silky long hair that was slightly curled up at the end, she conducted herself with professionalism. With light makeup and plump glossy lips, all of it made her look exceedingly charming.

Frankly, there weren't any major changes with Stella, but somehow there was something different about her which he couldn't quite tell.

About their breakup, Stella did notice something strange, for Miles seemed to have accepted the breakup calmly and didn't even bother to question further. From the way he replied, she couldn't help but wonder whether there was an underlying reason or a misunderstanding behind. Then again, it didn't really matter anymore since they had broken up, and she really couldn't accept being someone else's replacement.

Once she reached home, she decided to first settle the design proposal and then send a copy over to Hollowcrest City.

While she was organizing the proposal, Miles' face just kept crossing her mind. Somehow, she felt he was like a stranger to her now. Previously when they were together, he would smile at her and would even give suggestive gestures, but from the looks of it now, it seemed like that person was not the real Miles after all—the glacial side of him was in fact the real him.

It was a Saturday the next day, and Stella headed to her boutique.

As the president of Hollowcrest City, Matthew would perform random inspections on all of his boutiques. Considering that Stella's boutique was one of the few in Murdough, he would turn up quite often, since they had known each other.

When Matthew knew that Miles had a meeting to attend in Murdough this time, both of them had made time to meet up together.

"Is the meeting over?" asked Matthew.

"Yeah," Miles replied while gently massaging his forehead, looking a little exhausted.

"Since you've nothing much to do today in Murdough, why not follow me around to inspect the boutiques?" suggested Matthew.

“Where?” asked Miles frostily.

Miles was a cold and cheerless person all along. In the past, one might still catch him smiling sometimes, but it seemed like he had lost his smile now.

“There aren’t many boutiques around Murdough, so just tag along.”

With his hand halted, Miles said, “No!”

Upon noticing his hand’s momentary pause, Matthew knew that Miles must have thought of Stella and learned about her being one of his fashion brand agents now.

As their car drove past Central Parks, Miles couldn’t help but gaze out the car. Likewise, Matthew followed after his gaze and looked out too, but didn’t see anything special and reckoned that this place had probably left a strong impression on Miles.

As soon as they arrived at the entrance of Stella’s boutique, Miles didn’t really mind as he had never stepped into this place and was unaware that this boutique belonged to Stella.

Standing at the cashier counter, Stella was doing an inventory check in preparation for the next season of new arrivals. As she was so focused on working on the computer, she didn’t realize Matthew and Miles were walking in.

“Stella, how’s business so far?” asked Matthew.

Every so often, Matthew would drop by, so Stella wasn’t too surprised. But the moment she lifted her head, she saw Miles following behind him.

“All is well. President Xenon, please come and have a seat at the office.” Stella gestured to Matthew to head toward the room behind.

“Nah, it’s fine. Please help pick a shirt for President Grant here.” Matthew casually took a seat at one of the chairs meant for customers to rest.

Looking as confused as Stella, both Miles and Stella looked toward Matthew.

“President Grant is going to attend an important meeting, but he didn’t bring enough clothes, so I purposely brought him here to pick a shirt,” explained Matthew while sitting there.

Hearing that, Miles had his eyebrows knitted together. At the same time, Stella felt she was being put in an awkward situation. Then again, she was professional when it came to serving customers, so she forced herself to fake a polite smile and went ahead to pick a black shirt for him. This dark color palette suited Matthew very much, as it accentuated his charming cool vibes while giving an impression that he did not possess any desires. But in actual fact, he wasn’t that saintly.

After taking the shirt from the display, Stella stood behind Miles and placed the shirt over his back as though she was trying to confirm a measurement, then she stood in front of him. Frankly, she knew his size by heart—185L. His figure wasn’t plump, but more toward the lean side.

The measurement of the Amon brand was fairly accurate, but still, she insisted on taking the measurement. Standing before Miles at this very moment, she could hear his steady breathing and smell

the attractive masculine scent that could easily make her heart race. With her head lowered, she could only fix her eyes at his shirt.

Her main motive in insisting on taking a measurement wasn't because she wanted to be close to him, but plainly because she wanted to act like she had no clue of Miles' clothes size.

"President Grant, this will suit you. Do you wish to give it a try?" asked Stella.

"That's not necessary," rejected Miles. Just then, someone called for Stella from the entrance. As they turned around and looked toward the entrance, they saw Zane walking in.

"Stella, I'm in a rush. President James has invited me to attend a social gathering. Can you hurry up and pick a shirt for me?" said Zane while walking in hastily.

"Sure." With that, Stella left Miles alone and went to pick out a shirt for Zane.

President James was Zane's client, as well as the landlord of her boutique.

In this case, Stella and Zane were in this together, so she had to take this seriously. If Zane would so much as offend President James in any way, her boutique would most likely be affected as well.

After picking out a shirt for Zane, she passed it to him and said, "Remember to be nice with President James."

"I know that."

Though the boutique was relatively huge, Matthew could still hear them from a distance. Frowning, Matthew hadn't planned to let Miles see this.

"Miles, let's go," said Matthew. "Bring along the shirt. Treat it as a gift from me. It came all the way from my factory anyway!"

"I don't need it," said Miles, and he walked off.

As soon as Zane had put on the shirt, Stella pivoted, but Miles was nowhere to be seen.

As the boutique was rather huge, Zane didn't even notice Miles and Matthew were around. Likewise, Stella clearly didn't expect they would just leave without saying a word, so after Zane left, she just stood there on her own.

Three days later, something unfortunate happened to Zane, or more precisely—something happened to President James, for he owed a huge sum of money. As a chain reaction, he had to use his shops to pay his mortgage.

In terms of business, Stella understood that nothing was certain, and there could be unpredictable changes. Previously, she didn't even have to pay for the shop rental, but now, even after the debt was cleared, they certainly wouldn't allow her to rent this place. The rental here simply cost over one million a year.

Since Stella had just bought the stocks for next season, her current cash flow was rather tight at the moment. Hence, she didn't have any extra savings at all.

Zane couldn't possibly help her out because he still had to continue working on the construction project for President James.

Not knowing what else to do, Stella was dumbstruck.

If she were to find another shop to rent now, it would delay her product launch, directly affecting the sales. Failing to capitalize on the opportunity would cause millions to go down the drain.

On top of that, she had already owed Miles more than a million. During this period of time, all she had in mind was earning more money; the only way to repay all her debts was to earn more money. However, based on her current circumstance, not only was she unable to afford to pay her debts, but she might even end up in more debt, not to mention bearing the rental cost should she decide to rent another shop.

Stella even made a point to call up the headquarters in Hollowcrest to delay sending the stocks for the next season because she was in a sticky situation.

When Matthew asked what was the problem, Stella simply skimmed through the collaborative relationship between her, Zane, and President James. In a nutshell, she summarized that she faced an issue with the rental of her current shop. At the moment, she didn't have extra cash to rent another shop because most of her money had been used to stock up. In any case, if she couldn't find a suitable shop, those stocks were bound to end up in the dumpster, and by then, all would be lost for her.

Not long later, Matthew replied and said that he remembered Miles seemed to have a shop in Murdough.

Dumbfounded, Stella didn't understand what Matthew meant by that. Considering that she and Miles had broken up for quite a while, there was no way she could possibly beg for his help.

After thinking about it, Stella made up her mind to not seek help from Miles. After all, they had ended their relationship, and besides, this wasn't a minor issue. If she would ask him for help, it would somehow complicate things between them.

While she was still absorbed in thoughts, she received an unexpected WhatsApp message from Miles.

'I heard from Matthew that you were looking for me. I'll be staying in the Majestic Hotel tonight. Room No. 2032.'

Surprised, Stella wondered why in the world did Matthew tell Miles about her predicament. And what is the meaning of this message anyway? Hotel? A man and a woman? Isn't it obvious that it's about getting a room together?

Upon thinking about it, Stella thought it would be better to send a WhatsApp message. 'President Xenon mentioned that you have a vacant shop lot in Murdough. I was wondering whether you can rent it to me?'

A long while later, he replied, 'I don't remember.'

Seeing that, Stella was lost for words and thought, How can he forget? For crying out loud, it's such a big shop! Is he too rich or is he just forgetful?

Since he couldn't remember, Stella sent a reply. 'I apologize for taking up your time.'

'I think it's in New Eden.' His reply came promptly.

Drawing in a deep breath, Stella was devastated. Everyone knew that New Eden was considered the golden area—almost a central business district. For such a big shop, the rental would be... unimaginable.

Without replying to his message, Stella figured perhaps it was about time she gave up on the business and returned all the clothes back to the factory instead of finding another shop to rent.

'Meet me at the hotel tonight.' Another message came from him.

Upon receiving such a message from Miles, Stella intended to reject his offer, so she called his number, but his phone was switched off.

Setting everything aside, she made up her mind to go for it. Even if things didn't turn out, she didn't have anything to lose.

At night, Stella went there while feeling her heart leaped into her throat.

Knocking on the door, she heard the familiar voice, asking her to enter. In a daze, she felt as though she had gone back to the time when she was still working in Miles Conglomerate. Back then, she would often enter his office.

Feeling as though her heart was being gripped hard or scraped by sharp nails, Stella felt her heart was mutilated.

As soon as she walked in, she saw Miles fastening the belt on his white robe. Upon realizing that she came in at the wrong time, she immediately looked away.

Although the man was looking down, he seemed to have noticed Stella's sudden gesture. "It's not like you haven't seen me in this state before. Why are you acting so reserved?"

Hearing that, Stella felt a flush crept up her face.